News release

Met Office! Met Office! Read all about it!

22 July 2002

A one-stop shop to provide help to humanitarian aid agencies dealing with natural disasters is being set up by the Met Office, its Annual Report has revealed.

The Met Office actively contributes to the World Weather Watch programme of the World Meteorological Organization — the UN body that co-ordinates meteorology and hydrology. In the UK, the Met Office also works closely with key public authorities to provide new services to improve their operational effectiveness. These include helping the Environment Agency in the mitigation of flood damage, and providing information to the health service to help hospital trusts better manage their resources.

These successful ventures form the basis for the new environmental prediction and impacts centre, which will bring together all the skills necessary to help relief and development agencies, as well as businesses, throughout the world. The establishment of the centre is just one of the initiatives highlighted in the Met Office's Annual Report this year. There is also a strong emphasis on the Met Office staff, who are being encouraged to 'unlock' their potential. The Met Office was also recently re-accredited as an *Investor in People*, which one assessor noted was a major achievement at a time when the organisation is undergoing great change, not least of which being the relocation of the HQ and Operations Centre to Exeter.

Met Office Chief Executive, Peter Ewins, said: "In reporting our progress, it is a real pleasure to acknowledge the vital role played by our staff. Our standing among the international science community, our performance in meeting our customers' needs and our success as a business are all ultimately down to the quality, commitment and sheer professionalism of our people."

Other highlights outlined in the *Met Office Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2* include:

- support for UK and US armed forces in Afghanistan
- the launch of weatherXchange joint venture
- unveiling the new WTHR4 mobile phone service
- the opening of the new Innovation Centre and the first annual Innovation Awards ceremony

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